

SCHEDULE 3

Rule 4

Rules for Conduct of an Election of Councillors of a Principal Area where the Poll is taken together with the Poll at a Relevant Election or Referendum

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PART 1

Provisions as to Time

Timetable

1. The proceedings at the election shall be conducted in accordance with the following Table.

Timetable

| <i>Proceedings</i> | <i>Time</i> |
|---|--|
| Publication of notice of election | Not later than the twenty-fifth day before the day of election. |
| Delivery of nomination papers | Not later than noon on the nineteenth day before the day of election, except that where the poll at the principal area election is combined with the poll at a European Parliamentary election, nomination papers may be delivered until 4 in the afternoon. |
| Publication of statement as to persons nominated | Not later than noon on the seventeenth day before the day of election. |
| Delivery of notices of withdrawals of candidature | Not later than noon on the sixteenth day before the day of election. |
| Notice of poll | Not later than the sixth day before the day of election. |
| Polling | Between the hours of 7 in the morning and 10 at night on the day of election. |

Computation of time

- 2.—(1) In computing any period of time for the purposes of the Timetable—
- (a) a Saturday or Sunday,
 - (b) Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a bank holiday, or
 - (c) a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning,

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shall be disregarded, and any such day shall not be treated as a day for the purpose of any proceedings up to the completion of the poll nor shall the returning officer be obliged to proceed with the counting of the votes on such a day.

(2) In this rule “bank holiday” means a day which is a bank holiday under the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971(1) in England and Wales.

PART 2

Stages Common to Contested and Uncontested Elections

Notice of election

3.—(1) The returning officer must publish notice of the election stating—

- (a) the place and times at which nomination papers are to be delivered, and
- (b) the date of the poll in the event of a contest,

and the notice must state that forms of nomination papers may be obtained at that place and those times.

(2) The notice of election must state the date by which—

- (a) applications to vote by post or by proxy, and
- (b) other applications and notices about postal or proxy voting,

must reach the registration officer in order that they may be effective for the election.

Nomination of candidates

4.—(1) Each candidate must be nominated by a separate nomination paper, in the form in the Appendix, delivered at the place fixed for the purpose by the returning officer, which shall be at the offices of the council of the district or London borough in which the electoral area wholly or mainly lies.

(2) The nomination paper must state the candidate’s—

- (a) full names,
- (b) home address in full, and
- (c) if desired, description,

and the surname must be placed first in the list of names.

(3) If a candidate commonly uses—

- (a) a surname which is different from any other surname he has, or
- (b) a forename which is different from any other forename he has,

the nomination paper may state the commonly used surname or forename in addition to the other name.

(4) The description (if any) can only be—

- (a) one authorised as mentioned in rule 5(1) or (3); or
- (b) the word “Independent”.

(1) 1971 c.80

Nomination papers: name of registered political party

5.—(1) A nomination paper may not include a description of a candidate which is likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with a registered political party unless the party is a qualifying party in relation to the electoral area and the description is authorised by a certificate—

- (a) issued by or on behalf of the registered nominating officer of the party, and
- (b) received by the returning officer before the last time for the delivery of nomination papers set out in the Table in rule 1.

(2) In paragraph (1) an authorised description may be either—

- (a) the name of the party registered under section 28 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000(2), or
- (b) a description of the party registered under section 28A of that Act(3).

(3) A nomination paper may not include a description of a candidate which is likely to lead electors to associate the candidate with two or more registered political parties unless the parties are each qualifying parties in relation to the electoral area and the description is a registered description authorised by a certificate—

- (a) issued by or on behalf of the registered nominating officer of each of the parties, and
- (b) received by the returning officer before the last time for the delivery of nomination papers set out in the Table in rule 1.

(4) For the purposes of paragraph (3), a description is a registered description if it is a description registered for use by the parties under section 28B of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000(4).

(5) A person shall be guilty of a corrupt practice if he fraudulently purports to be authorised to issue a certificate under paragraph (1) or (3) on behalf of a registered political party's nominating officer.

(6) For the purposes of the application of this rule in relation to an election—

- (a) “registered political party” means a party which was registered under Part 2 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 on the day (“the relevant day”) which is two days before the last day for the delivery of nomination papers at that election;
- (b) a registered political party is a qualifying party in relation to an electoral area if the electoral area is in England or Wales and the party was on the relevant day registered in respect of that part of Great Britain in the Great Britain register maintained under that Part of that Act.

(7) For the purposes of paragraph (6)(a), any day falling within rule 2(1) shall be disregarded.

Subscription of nomination paper

6.—(1) The nomination paper must be subscribed by two electors as proposer and seconder, and by eight other electors as assenting to the nomination.

(2) Where a nomination paper has the signatures of more than the required number of persons as proposing, seconding or assenting to the nomination of a candidate, the signature or signatures (up to the required number) appearing first on the paper in each category must be taken into account to the exclusion of any others in that category.

(2) Section 28 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c.41) was amended by S.I. 2004/366 and by section 48 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c.22).

(3) Section 28A of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c.41) was inserted by section 49(1) of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c.22).

(4) Section 28B of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c.41) was inserted by section 49(1) of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c.22).

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- (3) The nomination paper must give the electoral number of each person subscribing it.
- (4) The returning officer—
 - (a) must supply any elector with as many forms of nomination paper and forms of consent to nomination as may be required at the place and during the time for delivery of nomination papers, and
 - (b) must at any elector’s request prepare a nomination paper for signature,

but it is not necessary for a nomination or consent to nomination to be on a form supplied by the returning officer.

(5) A person must not subscribe more nomination papers than there are vacancies to be filled in the electoral area; nor subscribe any nomination paper in respect of an election in any other electoral area of the same local government area whilst the election in the first-mentioned electoral area is taking place:

Provided that a person shall not be prevented from subscribing a nomination paper by reason only of his having subscribed that of a candidate who has died or withdrawn before delivery of the first mentioned paper.

(6) If a person subscribes any nomination paper in contravention of paragraph (5), his signature shall be inoperative on all but those papers (up to the permitted number) which are first delivered.

- (7) In this rule “elector”—
 - (a) means a person who is registered in the register of local government electors for the electoral area in question on the last day for the publication of notice of the election; and
 - (b) includes a person then shown in the register as below voting age if (but only if) it appears from the register that he will be of voting age on the day fixed for the poll.

(8) But, in this rule, “elector” does not include a person who has an anonymous entry in the register.

Consent to nomination

- 7. A person shall not be validly nominated unless his consent to nomination—
 - (a) is given in writing on or within one month before the last day for the delivery of nomination papers,
 - (b) is in the form in the Appendix, or a form to the like effect, and includes a copy of sections 80 and 81 of the Local Government Act 1972(5) and section 79 of the Local Government Act 2000(6),
 - (c) is attested by one witness, and
 - (d) is delivered at the place and within the time for the delivery of nomination papers.

(5) [1972 c.70](#). Section 80 has been amended by the Local Government Act [2000 \(c.22\)](#) Schedule 3 paragraph 8, Schedule 5 paragraph 8 and Schedule 6; the Local Government and Housing Act [1989 \(c.42\)](#) Schedule 11 paragraph 21, Schedule 12 Part 2 and Schedule 14 paragraph 3; the Enterprise Act [2002 \(c.40\)](#) section 267(1); the Local Government Finance Act [1982 \(c.32\)](#), Schedule 6 Part 4; the Representation of the People Act [1983 \(c.2\)](#) Schedule 8 paragraph 12; the Audit Commission Act [1998 \(c.18\)](#) Schedule 3 paragraph 3(1); the Greater London Authority Act [1999 \(c. 29\)](#) section 69; the Environment Act [1995 \(c. 25\)](#) Schedule 10 paragraph 10(1); the Transport Act [1985 \(c.67\)](#) Schedule 8. It has also been amended by [S.I. 1999/2267](#), [2001/2237](#) and [2002/808](#). Section 81 has been amended by the Local Government Act [1985 \(c.51\)](#) Schedule 17 and the Education Reform Act [1988 \(c.40\)](#) Schedule 13 Part 2.

(6) [2000 c.22](#). Section 79 has been amended by the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act [2005 \(c.10\)](#) Schedule 4 paragraphs 1 and 20.

Decisions as to validity of nomination papers

8.—(1) Where a nomination paper and the candidate's consent to it are delivered in accordance with these Rules, the candidate shall be deemed to stand nominated unless and until—

- (a) the returning officer decides that the nomination paper is invalid; or
- (b) proof is given to the returning officer's satisfaction of the candidate's death; or
- (c) the candidate withdraws.

(2) The returning officer is entitled to hold a nomination paper invalid only on one of the following grounds—

- (a) that the particulars of the candidate or the persons subscribing the paper are not as required by law; and
- (b) that the paper is not subscribed as so required.

(3) Subject to paragraph (4), the returning officer must, as soon as practicable after each nomination paper has been delivered, examine it and decide whether the candidate has been validly nominated.

(4) If in the returning officer's opinion a nomination paper breaks rule 5(1) or (3), he must give a decision to that effect—

- (a) as soon as practicable after the delivery of the nomination paper, and
- (b) in any event, before the end of the period of 24 hours starting with the close of the period for delivery of nomination papers set out in the Table in rule 1.

(5) Where the returning officer decides that a nomination paper is invalid, he must endorse and sign on the paper the fact and the reasons for his decision.

(6) The returning officer must send notice of his decision that a nomination paper is valid or invalid to each candidate at his home address as given in his nomination paper.

(7) The returning officer's decision that a nomination paper is valid shall be final and shall not be questioned in any proceeding whatsoever.

(8) Subject to paragraph (7), nothing in this rule prevents the validity of a nomination being questioned on an election petition.

Publication of statement of persons nominated

9.—(1) The returning officer must prepare and publish a statement showing the persons who have been and stand nominated and any other persons who have been nominated, with the reason why they no longer stand nominated.

(2) The statement must show the names, addresses and descriptions of the persons nominated as given in their nomination papers.

(3) If a person's nomination paper gives a commonly used surname or forename in addition to another name, the statement must show the person's commonly used surname or forename (as the case may be) instead of any other name.

(4) Paragraph (3) does not apply if the returning officer thinks—

- (a) that the use of the person's commonly used name may be likely to mislead or confuse electors, or
- (b) that the commonly used name is obscene or offensive.

(5) If paragraph (4) applies, the returning officer must give notice in writing to the candidate of his reasons for refusing to allow the use of a commonly used name.

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(6) The statement must show the persons standing nominated arranged alphabetically in the order of their surnames, and if there are two or more of them with the same surname, of their other names.

(7) In the case of a person nominated by more than one nomination paper, the returning officer must take the particulars required by the foregoing provisions of this rule from such one of the papers as the candidate (or the returning officer in default of the candidate) may select.

Correction of minor errors

10.—(1) A returning officer may, if he thinks fit, at any time before the publication under rule 9 of the statement of persons nominated, correct minor errors in a nomination paper.

(2) Errors which may be corrected include—

- (a) errors as to a person's electoral number;
- (b) obvious errors of spelling in relation to the details of a candidate.

(3) Anything done by a returning officer in pursuance of this rule shall not be questioned in any proceedings other than proceedings on an election petition.

(4) A returning officer must have regard to any guidance issued by the Electoral Commission for the purposes of this rule.

Inspection of nomination papers and consents to nomination

11. During ordinary office hours on any day, other than a day specified in rule 2(1), after the latest time for delivery of nomination papers and before the date of the poll, any person may inspect and take copies of, or extracts from, nomination papers and consents to nomination.

Nomination in more than one electoral area

12. A candidate who is validly nominated for more than one electoral area of the same local government area, must withdraw from his candidature in all those electoral areas except one, and if he does not so withdraw, he shall be deemed to have withdrawn from his candidature in all those electoral areas.

Withdrawal of candidates

13.—(1) A candidate may withdraw his candidature by notice of withdrawal—

- (a) signed by him and attested by one witness, and
- (b) delivered to the returning officer at the place for delivery of nomination papers.

(2) Where a candidate is outside the United Kingdom, a notice of withdrawal signed by his proposer and accompanied by a written declaration also so signed of the candidate's absence from the United Kingdom shall be of the same effect as a notice of withdrawal signed by the candidate; but where the candidate stands nominated by more than one nomination paper a notice of withdrawal under this paragraph shall be effective if, and only if—

- (a) it and the accompanying declaration are signed by all the proposers except any who is, and is stated in that declaration to be, outside the United Kingdom; or
- (b) it is accompanied, in addition to that declaration, by a written statement signed by the candidate that the proposer giving the notice is authorised to do so on the candidate's behalf during his absence from the United Kingdom.

Method of election

14.—(1) If the number of persons remaining validly nominated for the electoral area after any withdrawals under these Rules exceeds the number of councillors to be elected, a poll must be taken in accordance with Part 3 of these Rules.

(2) If the number of persons remaining validly nominated for the electoral area after any withdrawals under these Rules does not exceed the number of councillors to be elected, such person or persons must be declared to be elected in accordance with Part 4 of these Rules.

PART 3

Contested Elections

CHAPTER 1

General Provisions

Poll to be taken by ballot

15. The votes at the poll must be given by ballot, the result must be ascertained by counting the votes given to each candidate and the candidate or candidates to whom more votes have been given than to the other candidates, up to the number of councillors to be elected, must be declared to have been elected.

The ballot papers

16.—(1) The ballot of every voter must consist of a ballot paper, and the persons remaining validly nominated for the electoral area after any withdrawals under these Rules, and no others, shall be entitled to have their names inserted in the ballot paper.

(2) Every ballot paper must be in the form in the Appendix, and must be printed in accordance with the directions in that Appendix, and—

- (a) must contain the names and other particulars of the candidates as shown in the statement of persons nominated;
- (b) must be capable of being folded up;
- (c) must have a number and other unique identifying mark printed on the back; and
- (d) must be of a different colour from that of any ballot papers used at any relevant election or referendum.

(3) If a candidate who is the subject of a party's authorisation under rule 5(1) so requests, the ballot paper must contain, against the candidate's particulars, the party's registered emblem (or, as the case may be, one of the party's registered emblems).

(4) The candidate's request under paragraph (3) must—

- (a) be made in writing to the returning officer, and
- (b) be received by him before the last time for the delivery of nomination papers set out in the Table in rule 1.

(5) The order of the names in the ballot paper must be the same as in the statement of persons nominated.

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The corresponding number list

17.—(1) The returning officer must prepare a list containing the numbers and other unique identifying marks of all of the ballot papers to be issued by him in pursuance of rule 22(1) or provided by him in pursuance of rule 26(1).

(2) The list must be in the appropriate form in the Appendix or a form to like effect.

The official mark

18.—(1) Every ballot paper must contain an appropriate security marking (the official mark).

(2) The official mark must be kept secret, and an interval of not less than five years shall intervene between the use of the same official mark at elections for the same county, county borough, district or London borough as the case may be.

(3) The returning officer may use a different official mark for different purposes as the same election.

Prohibition of disclosure of vote

19. No person who has voted at the election shall, in any legal proceeding to question the election, be required to state for whom he has voted.

Use of schools and public rooms

20.—(1) The returning officer may use, free of charge, for the purpose of taking the poll or counting the votes—

- (a) a room in a school maintained or assisted by a local education authority or a school in respect of which grants are made out of moneys provided by Parliament to the person or body of persons responsible for the management of the school;
- (b) a room the expense of maintaining which is payable out of any rate.

(2) The returning officer must make good any damage done to, and defray any expense incurred by the persons having control over, any such room as mentioned above by reason of its being used for the purpose of taking the poll or counting the votes.

CHAPTER 2

Action to be Taken Before the Poll

Notice of Poll

21.—(1) The returning officer must publish notice of the poll stating—

- (a) the day and hours fixed for the poll;
- (b) the number of councillors to be elected;
- (c) the particulars of each candidate remaining validly nominated (the names and other particulars of the candidates, and the order of the candidates' names being the same as in the statement of persons nominated); and
- (d) the names of all persons signing a candidate's nomination paper.

(2) Where a candidate is nominated by more than one nomination paper, the nomination paper referred to in paragraph (1)(d) must be that from which the names and other particulars of the candidate shown in the statement of persons nominated are taken.

(3) The returning officer must, not later than the time of the publication of the notice of the poll, also give public notice of—

- (a) the situation of each polling station; and
- (b) the description of voters entitled to vote there,

and he must as soon as practicable after giving such a notice give a copy of it to each of the election agents.

- (4) The notice published under paragraph (3) must—
 - (a) state that the poll at the principal area election is to be taken together with the poll at a relevant election or referendum;
 - (b) specify the parliamentary constituency⁽⁷⁾, local counting area, Assembly constituency, voting area or, as the case may be, the relevant local authority and, in the case of an election to fill a casual vacancy, the electoral area for which the relevant election is held; and
 - (c) where any of the polls are to be taken together in part of the local government area only, specify that part.

Postal ballot papers

22.—(1) The returning officer must, in accordance with regulations made under the 1983 Act⁽⁸⁾, issue to those entitled to vote by post a ballot paper and a postal voting statement in the appropriate form in the Appendix, or a form to like effect, together with such envelopes for their return as may be prescribed by such regulations.

(2) The returning officer must also issue to those entitled to vote by post such information as he thinks appropriate about how to obtain—

- (a) translations into languages other than English of any directions to or guidance for voters sent with the ballot paper;
- (b) a translation into Braille of such directions or guidance;
- (c) graphical representations of such directions or guidance;
- (d) the directions or guidance in any other form (including any audible form).

(3) The postal voting statement must include provision for the form to be signed and for stating the date of birth of the elector or proxy (as the case may be).

(4) In the case of a ballot paper issued to a person at an address in the United Kingdom, the returning officer must ensure that the return of the ballot paper and postal voting statement is free of charge to the voter.

Provision of polling stations

23.—(1) The returning officer must provide a sufficient number of polling stations and, subject to the following provisions of this rule, must allot the electors to the polling stations in such manner as he thinks most convenient.

(2) One or more polling stations may be provided in the same room.

(3) The polling station allotted to electors from any parliamentary polling district wholly or partly within the electoral area must, in the absence of special circumstances, be in the parliamentary polling place for that district, unless that place is outside the electoral area.

(4) The returning officer must provide each polling station with such number of compartments as may be necessary in which the voters can mark their votes screened from observation.

⁽⁷⁾ For the meaning of “parliamentary constituency”, see section 1 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (c.56).

⁽⁸⁾ See the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 S.I. 2001/341 as amended by S.I. 2002/1871, 2006/752 and S.I. 2006/2910.

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Appointment of presiding officers and clerks

24.—(1) The returning officer must appoint and pay a presiding officer to attend at each polling station and such clerks as may be necessary for the purposes of the election, but he must not appoint any person who has been employed by or on behalf of a candidate in or about the election.

(2) The returning officer may, if he thinks fit, preside at a polling station and the provisions of these Rules relating to a presiding officer shall apply to a returning officer so presiding with the necessary modifications as to things to be done by the returning officer to the presiding officer or by the presiding officer to the returning officer.

(3) A presiding officer may do, by the clerks appointed to assist him, any act (including the asking of questions) which he is required or authorised by these Rules to do at a polling station except order the arrest, exclusion or removal of any person from the polling station.

Issue of official poll cards

25.—(1) The returning officer must as soon as practicable after the publication of the notice of election send to electors and their proxies an official poll card.

(2) An elector's official poll card must be sent or delivered to his qualifying address, and a proxy's to his address as shown in the list of proxies.

(3) The official poll card must be in the appropriate form in the Appendix, or a form to the like effect, and must set out—

- (a) the name of the council and of the electoral division or ward to which councillors are to be elected;
- (b) the elector's name, qualifying address and number on the register;
- (c) the date and hours of the poll and the situation of the elector's polling station;
- (d) such other information as the returning officer thinks appropriate,

and different information may be provided in pursuance of sub-paragraph (d) to different electors or descriptions of elector.

(4) In the case of an elector with an anonymous entry, instead of containing the matter mentioned in paragraph (3)(b), the polling card must contain such matter as is specified in the appropriate form in the Appendix.

(5) Paragraph (7) of rule 6 shall apply for the interpretation of this rule.

(6) If the returning officer and the returning officer for each relevant election or referendum think fit, an official poll card issued under this rule may be combined with the official poll card issued at every relevant election or referendum.

Equipment of polling stations

26.—(1) The returning officer must provide each presiding officer with such number of ballot boxes and ballot papers as in the returning officer's opinion may be necessary.

(2) The same ballot box may be used for the poll at the principal area election and the poll at every relevant election or referendum, if the returning officer thinks fit.

(3) Every ballot box must be so constructed that the ballot papers can be put in it, but cannot be withdrawn from it, without the box being unlocked or, where the box has no lock, the seal being broken.

(4) The returning officer must provide each polling station with—

- (a) materials to enable voters to mark the ballot papers;

- (b) copies of the register of electors for the electoral area or such part of it as contains the names of the electors allotted to the station;
 - (c) the parts of any special lists prepared for the election corresponding to the register of electors for the electoral area or the part of it provided under sub-paragraph (b);
 - (d) a list consisting of that part of the list prepared under rule 17 which contains the numbers (but not the other unique identifying marks) corresponding to those on the ballot papers provided to the presiding officer of the polling station.
- (5) The reference in paragraph (4)(b) to the copies of the register of electors includes a reference to copies of any notices issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act(9) in respect of alterations to the register.
- (6) The returning officer must also provide each polling station with—
- (a) at least one large version of the ballot paper which must be printed on the same colour paper as the ballot papers and displayed inside the polling station for the assistance of voters who are partially sighted; and
 - (b) a device of such description as is set out in paragraph (11) for enabling voters who are blind or partially sighted to vote without any need for assistance from the presiding officer or any companion (within the meaning of rule 37(1)).
- (7) Where notwithstanding paragraph (2) separate ballot boxes are to be used, each ballot box must be clearly marked with—
- (a) the election or referendum to which it relates, as shown on the ballot papers for that election or referendum; and
 - (b) the words “Place the [*specify colour of ballot papers in question*] ballot papers in here”.
- (8) A notice in the form in the Appendix, giving directions for the guidance of voters in voting, must be printed in conspicuous characters and exhibited inside and outside every polling station.
- (9) The returning officer may also provide copies of the notice mentioned in paragraph (8) in Braille or translated into languages other than English as he considers appropriate, provided that these notices are accurate reproductions in Braille or that other language of that notice.
- (10) In every compartment of every polling station there must be exhibited the following notice—
- *PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION
([Specify colour] ballot paper)
vote for ONE candidate only
- *EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION
([specify colour] ballot paper)
vote for ONE party or individual candidate only
- *[specify name of council] COUNCIL ELECTION
([specify colour] ballot paper)
*vote for no more than Candidates
*vote for ONE candidate only
- *ELECTION OF THE MAYOR OF LONDON
([specify colour] ballot paper)

(9) Section 13B of the 1983 Act was inserted by paragraph 3 of Schedule 2 to the Representation of the People Act 2000 (c.2) and amended by section 11(3) of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c.22). Subsections (3B) and (3D) of section 13B were inserted by section 11(4) of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c.22).

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[On the ballot paper for the election of the Mayor, vote ONCE for your first choice and ONCE for your second choice]

*ELECTION OF THE LONDON ASSEMBLY

[On the constituency members ballot paper [specify colour] vote for ONE candidate only]

#[On the London members ballot paper [specify colour] vote for ONE party or individual candidate only]

*[specify other] ELECTION/REFERENDUM

[specify colour ballot paper]

[vote for one candidate/answer only]/[vote ONCE for your first choice and ONCE for your second choice]

PUT NO OTHER MARK ON THE BALLOT PAPERS, OR YOUR VOTE MAY NOT BE COUNTED

*Complete or omit as necessary.

#This wording should be used where the GLRO has not supplied wording pursuant to the Greater London Authority Elections (No.2) Rules 2000(10).

(11) The device referred to in paragraph (6)(b) must—

- (a) allow a ballot paper to be inserted into and removed from, or attached to and detached from, the device easily and without damage to the paper;
- (b) hold the ballot paper firmly in place during use; and
- (c) provide suitable means for the voter to—
 - (i) identify the spaces on the ballot paper on which he may mark his vote;
 - (ii) identify the registered party or individual candidate to which each such space refers; and
 - (iii) mark his vote on the space he has chosen.

Appointment of polling and counting agents

27.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (3) and (4), each candidate may, before the commencement of the poll, appoint—

- (a) polling agents to attend at polling stations for the purpose of detecting personation; and
- (b) counting agents to attend at the counting of the votes.

(2) The same person may be appointed as a polling agent or counting agent by more than one candidate.

(3) Not more than four polling agents, or such greater number as the returning officer may by notice allow, shall be permitted to attend at any particular polling station and if the number of such agents appointed to attend at a particular polling station exceeds that number, the returning officer must determine which agents are permitted to attend by lot and only the agents on whom the lot falls shall be deemed to have been duly appointed.

(4) The returning officer may limit the number of counting agents, so however that—

- (a) the number must be the same in the case of each candidate; and
- (b) the number allowed to a candidate must not (except in special circumstances) be less than the number obtained by dividing the number of clerks employed on the counting by the number of candidates.

For the purposes of the calculations required by this paragraph, a counting agent who has been appointed for more than one candidate is a separate agent for each of the candidates by whom he has been appointed.

(5) Notice in writing of the appointment, stating the names and addresses of the persons appointed, must be given by the candidate to the returning officer and must be so given not later than the fifth day (disregarding any day referred to in rule 2(1)) before the day of the poll.

(6) Notices of the appointment of polling agents and counting agents which are required by paragraph (5) above and paragraphs (7) and (8) below to be given to the returning officer must be given to that returning officer who discharges the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations(11).

(7) If an agent dies, or becomes incapable of acting, the candidate may appoint another agent in his place, and must forthwith give to the returning officer notice in writing of the name and address of the agent appointed.

(8) Any appointment authorised by this rule may be made and the notice of appointment given to the returning officer by the candidate's election agent, instead of by the candidate.

(9) In the following provisions of these Rules references to polling agents and counting agents shall be taken as references to agents—

- (a) whose appointments have been duly made and notified; and
- (b) where the number of agents is restricted, who are within the permitted numbers.

(10) Any notice required to be given to a counting agent by the returning officer may be delivered at, or sent by post to, the address stated in the notice of appointment.

(11) A candidate may himself do any act or thing which any polling or counting agent of his, if appointed, would have been authorised to do, or may assist his agent in doing any such act or thing.

(12) A candidate's election agent may do or assist in doing anything which the candidate's polling or counting agent is authorised to do; and anything required or authorised by these Rules to be done in the presence of the polling or counting agents may be done in the presence of a candidate's election agent instead of his polling agent or counting agents.

(13) Where by these Rules any act or thing is required or authorised to be done in the presence of the polling or counting agents, the non-attendance of any agent or agents at the time and place appointed for the purpose shall not, if the act or thing is otherwise duly done, invalidate the act or thing done.

Notification of requirement of secrecy

28. The returning officer must make such arrangements as he thinks fit to ensure that—

- (a) every person attending at a polling station (otherwise than for the purpose of voting or assisting a voter with disabilities to vote or as a constable on duty there) has been given a copy in writing of the provisions of subsections (1), (3) and (6) of section 66 of the 1983 Act(12); and
- (b) every person attending at the counting of the votes (other than any constable on duty at the counting) has been given a copy in writing of the provisions of subsections (2) and (6) of that section.

(11) Regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations has been amended by [S.I. 2006/3278](#).

(12) Subsections (1), (2) and (3) of section 66 of the 1983 Act were amended by paragraphs 69, 82, 86(b) and 96 of Schedule 1 to the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c.22); subsection (6) was amended by paragraph 3 of Schedule 3 to the Representation of the People Act 1985 (c.50).

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Return of postal ballot papers

29.—(1) Where—

- (a) a postal vote has been returned in respect of a person who is entered on the postal voters list, or
- (b) a proxy postal vote has been returned in respect of a proxy who is entered on the proxy postal voters list,

the returning officer must mark the list in the manner prescribed by regulations made under the 1983 Act⁽¹³⁾.

(2) Rule 45(6) does not apply for the purpose of determining whether, for the purposes of this rule, a postal vote or a proxy postal vote is returned.

CHAPTER 3

The Poll

Admission to the polling station

30.—(1) The presiding officer must exclude all persons from the polling station except—

- (a) voters;
- (b) persons under the age of 18 who accompany voters to the polling station;
- (c) the candidates and their election agents;
- (d) the polling agents appointed to attend at the polling station;
- (e) the clerks appointed to attend at the polling station;
- (f) persons who are entitled to attend by virtue of any of sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000⁽¹⁴⁾;
- (g) the constables on duty;
- (h) the companions of voters with disabilities; and
- (i) persons entitled to be admitted to the polling station at a relevant election or referendum with which the poll at the principal area election is combined.

(2) The presiding officer must regulate the total number of voters and persons under the age of 18 who accompany them to be admitted to the polling station at the same time.

(3) Not more than one polling agent shall be admitted at the same time to a polling station on behalf of the same candidate.

(4) A constable or person employed by a returning officer must not be admitted to vote in person elsewhere than at his own polling station allotted to him under these Rules, except on production and surrender of a certificate as to his employment which must be in the form in the Appendix, or a form to the like effect, and signed by an officer of police of or above the rank of inspector or by the returning officer, as the case may be.

(5) Any certificate surrendered under this rule must forthwith be cancelled.

Keeping of order in station

31.—(1) It is the presiding officer's duty to keep order at his polling station.

(13) See regulation 84A of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 [S.I. 2001/341](#) as amended by [S.I. 2006/2910](#).

(14) Sections 6A to 6F of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 ([c.41](#)) were inserted by section 29 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 ([c.22](#)).

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(2) If a person misconducts himself in a polling station, or fails to obey the presiding officer’s lawful orders, he may immediately, by the presiding officer’s order, be removed from the polling station—

- (a) by a constable in or near that station, or
- (b) by any other person authorised in writing by the returning officer to remove him,

and the person so removed shall not, without the presiding officer’s permission, again enter the polling station during the day.

(3) Any person so removed may, if charged with the commission in the polling station of an offence, be dealt with as a person taken into custody by a constable for an offence without a warrant.

(4) The powers conferred by this rule must not be exercised so as to prevent a voter who is otherwise entitled to vote at a polling station from having an opportunity of voting at that station.

Sealing of ballot boxes

32. Immediately before the commencement of the poll, the presiding officer must show the ballot box empty to such persons, if any, as are present in the polling station, so that they may see that it is empty, and must then lock it up, if it has a lock and (in any case) place his seal on it in such a manner as to prevent its being opened without breaking the seal and must place it in his view for the receipt of ballot papers, and keep it so locked and sealed or sealed (as the case may be).

Questions to be put to voters

33.—(1) At the time of the application (but not afterwards), the questions specified in the second column of the following Table—

- (a) may be put by the presiding officer to a person applying for a ballot paper who is mentioned in the first column, and
- (b) must be put if the letter “R” appears after the question and the candidate or his election or polling agent requires the question to be put:

| <i>Q. No</i> | <i>Person applying for ballot paper</i> | <i>Question</i> |
|--------------|---|---|
| 1 | A person applying as an elector | <p>(a) —Are you the person registered in the register of local government electors for this election as follows?</p> <p><i>read the whole entry from the register [R]</i></p> <p>(b) —Have you already voted here or elsewhere at this election for *(this county) *(this district) *(this London borough) *(this county borough),</p> <p><i>*delete whichever is inapplicable</i></p> <p><i>(adding, in the case of an election for several electoral areas, in this or any other electoral area) otherwise than as proxy for some other person? [R]</i></p> |
| 2 | A person applying as proxy | <p>(a) —Are you the person whose name appears as A.B. in the list of proxies for this election as entitled to vote as proxy on behalf of C.D.? [R]</p> |

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| <i>Q. No</i> | <i>Person applying for ballot paper</i> | <i>Question</i> |
|--------------|---|---|
| | | <p>(b) —Have you already voted here or elsewhere at this election for *(this county) *(this district) *(this London borough) *(this county borough),</p> <p><i>*delete whichever is inapplicable</i></p> <p><i>(adding in the case of an election for several electoral areas, in this or any other electoral area)</i></p> <p>as proxy on behalf of C.D.? [R]</p> <p>(c) —Are you the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild of C.D.? [R]</p> |
| 3 | A person applying as proxy for an elector with an anonymous entry (instead of the questions at entry 2) | <p>(a) —Are you the person entitled to vote as proxy on behalf of the elector whose number on the register of electors is <i>(read out the number)?</i> [R]</p> <p>(b) —Have you already voted here or elsewhere as proxy on behalf of the elector whose number on the register of electors is <i>(read out the number)?</i> [R]</p> <p>(c) —Are you the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild of the person whose number on the register of electors is <i>(read out the number)?</i> [R]</p> |
| 4 | A person applying as proxy if the question at entry 2(c) or 3(c) is not answered in the affirmative | <p>Have you already voted at this election for *(this county) *(this district) *(this London borough) *(this county borough),</p> <p><i>*delete whichever is inapplicable</i></p> <p><i>(adding, in the case of an election for several electoral areas, in this or any other electoral area)</i></p> <p>on behalf of two persons of whom you are not the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild? [R]</p> |
| 5 | A person applying as an elector in relation to whom there is an entry in the postal voters list | <p>(a) —Did you apply to vote by post?</p> <p>(b) —Why have you not voted by post?</p> |
| 6 | A person applying as proxy who is named in the proxy postal voters list | <p>(a) —Did you apply to vote by post as proxy?</p> <p>(b) —Why have you not voted by post as proxy?</p> |

(2) In the case of an elector in respect of whom a notice has been issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act, the references in the questions at entries 1(a) and 3(a), (b) and (c) to reading

from the register shall be taken as references to reading from the notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act.

(3) A ballot paper must not be delivered to any person required to answer any of the above questions unless he has answered each question satisfactorily.

(4) Except as authorised by this rule, no inquiry shall be permitted as to the right of any person to vote.

Challenge of voter

34. A person must not be prevented from voting by reason only that—

- (a) a candidate or his election or polling agent declares that he has reasonable cause to believe that the person has committed an offence of personation, or
- (b) the person is arrested on the grounds that he is suspected of committing or of being about to commit such an offence.

Voting procedure

35.—(1) A ballot paper must be delivered to a voter who applies for one, and immediately before delivery—

- (a) the number and (unless paragraph (2) applies) name of the elector as stated in the copy of the register of electors must be called out;
- (b) the number of the elector must be marked on the list mentioned in rule 26(4)(d) beside the number of the ballot paper to be issued to him;
- (c) a mark must be placed in the register of electors against the number of the elector to note that a ballot paper has been received but without showing the particular ballot paper which has been received; and
- (d) in the case of a person applying for a ballot paper as proxy, a mark must also be placed against his name in the list of proxies.

(2) In the case of an elector who has an anonymous entry, he must show the presiding officer his official poll card and only his number shall be called out in pursuance of paragraph (1)(a).

(3) In the case of an elector who is added to the register in pursuance of a notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act⁽¹⁵⁾, paragraph (1) is modified as follows—

- (a) in sub-paragraph (a), for “copy of the register of electors” substitute “copy of the notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act”;
- (b) in sub-paragraph (c), for “in the register of electors” substitute “on the copy of the notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act”.

(4) The voter, on receiving the ballot paper, must forthwith proceed into one of the compartments in the polling station and there secretly mark his paper and fold it up so as to conceal his vote, and must then show to the presiding officer the back of the paper, so as to disclose the number and other unique identifying mark, and put the ballot paper so folded up into the ballot box in the presiding officer’s presence.

(5) The voter must vote without undue delay, and must leave the polling station as soon as he has put his ballot paper into the ballot box.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Section 13B of the 1983 Act was inserted by paragraph 3 of Schedule 2 to the Representation of the People Act 2000 (c.2) and amended by section 11(3) of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c.22). Subsections (3B) and (3D) of section 13B were inserted by section 11(4) of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c.22).

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(6) The same copy of the register of electors which is used under paragraph (1) for the principal area election or, where paragraph (3) applies, the same copy of the notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act, may be used for each relevant election or referendum—

- (a) and one mark may be placed in that register or on that notice under paragraph (1)(c) or in the list of proxies under paragraph (1)(d) to denote that a ballot paper has been issued in respect of each election or referendum;
- (b) but where a ballot paper has not been issued in respect of a relevant election or referendum, a different mark must be placed in the register or, as the case may be, on that notice or in that list so as to identify each election or referendum in respect of which a ballot paper was issued.

Votes marked by presiding officer

36.—(1) The presiding officer, on the application of a voter—

- (a) who is incapacitated by blindness or other disability from voting in the manner directed by these Rules, or
- (b) who declares orally that he is unable to read,

must, in the presence of the polling agents, cause the voter's vote to be marked on a ballot paper in the manner directed by the voter, and the ballot paper to be placed in the ballot box.

(2) The name and number on the register of electors of every voter whose vote is marked in pursuance of this rule, and the reason why it is so marked, must be entered on a list (in these Rules called "the list of votes marked by the presiding officer").

In the case of a person voting as proxy for an elector, the number to be entered together with the voter's name shall be the elector's number.

(3) In the case of a person in respect of whom a notice has been issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act, paragraph (2) applies as if for "on the register of electors of every voter" there were substituted "relating to every voter in respect of whom a notice has been issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act".

(4) The same list may be used for the principal area election and each relevant election or referendum and, where it is so used, an entry in that list shall be taken to mean that the ballot papers were so marked in respect of each election or referendum, unless the list identifies the election or referendum at which the ballot paper was so marked.

Voting by persons with disabilities

37.—(1) If a voter makes an application to the presiding officer to be allowed, on the ground of—

- (a) blindness or other disability, or
- (b) inability to read,

to vote with the assistance of another person by whom he is accompanied (in these Rules referred to as "the companion"), the presiding officer must require the voter to declare, orally or in writing, whether he is so incapacitated by his blindness or other disability, or by his inability to read, as to be unable to vote without assistance.

(2) If the presiding officer—

- (a) is satisfied that the voter is so incapacitated, and
- (b) is also satisfied by a written declaration made by the companion (in these Rules referred to as "the declaration made by the companion of a voter with disabilities") that the companion—
 - (i) is a qualified person within the meaning of this rule; and

(ii) has not previously assisted more than one voter with disabilities to vote at the election,

the presiding officer must grant the application, and then anything which is by these Rules required to be done to, or by that voter in connection with the giving of his vote may be done to, or with the assistance of, the companion.

(3) For the purposes of these Rules, a person is a voter with disabilities if he has made such a declaration as is mentioned in paragraph (1), and a person shall be qualified to assist a voter with disabilities to vote if that person—

- (a) is a person who is entitled to vote as an elector at the election; or
- (b) is the father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, civil partner, son or daughter of the voter and has attained the age of 18 years.

(4) The name and number in the register of electors of every voter whose vote is given in accordance with this rule and the name and address of the companion must be entered on a list (in these Rules referred to as “the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions”).

In the case of a person voting as proxy for an elector, the number to be entered together with the voter’s name shall be the elector’s number.

(5) In the case of a person in respect of whom a notice has been issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act, paragraph (4) applies as if for “in the register of electors of every voter” there were substituted “relating to every voter in respect of whom a notice has been issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act”.

(6) The same list may be used for the principal area election and each relevant election and referendum and, where it is so used, an entry in that list shall be taken to mean that the votes were so given in respect of each election or referendum, unless the list identifies the election or referendum at which the vote was so given.

- (7) The declaration made by the companion—
- (a) must be in the form in the Appendix,
 - (b) must be made before the presiding officer at the time when the voter applies to vote with the assistance of a companion, and
 - (c) must forthwith be given to the presiding officer who must attest and retain it.
- (8) No fee or other payment shall be charged in respect of the declaration.

Tendered ballot papers: circumstances where available

- 38.**—(1) If a person, representing himself to be—
- (a) a particular elector named on the register and not named in the absent voters list, or
 - (b) a particular person named in the list of proxies as proxy for an elector and not entitled to vote by post as proxy,

applies for a ballot paper after another person has voted in person either as the elector or his proxy, the applicant shall, on satisfactorily answering the questions permitted by law to be asked at the poll, be entitled, subject to the following provisions of this rule and rule 39, to mark a ballot paper (in these Rules referred to as “a tendered ballot paper”) in the same manner as any other voter.

- (2) Paragraph (4) applies if—
- (a) a person applies for a ballot paper representing himself to be a particular elector named on the register,
 - (b) he is also named in the postal voters list, and
 - (c) he claims that he did not make an application to vote by post at the election.

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(3) Paragraph (4) also applies if—

- (a) a person applies for a ballot paper representing himself to be a particular person named as a proxy in the list of proxies,
- (b) he is also named in the proxy postal voters list, and
- (c) he claims that he did not make an application to vote by post as proxy.

(4) The person shall, on satisfactorily answering the questions permitted by law to be asked at the poll, be entitled, subject to the following provisions of this rule and rule 39, to mark a ballot paper (in these Rules referred to as a “tendered ballot paper”) in the same manner as any other voter.

(5) Paragraph (6) applies if before the close of the poll but after the last time at which a person may apply for a replacement postal ballot paper, a person represents himself to be—

- (a) a particular elector named on the register who is also named in the postal voters list, or
- (b) a particular person named as a proxy in the list of proxies and who is also named in the proxy postal voters list,

and claims that he has lost or has not received his postal ballot paper.

(6) The person shall, on satisfactorily answering the questions permitted by law to be asked at the poll, be entitled, subject to the provisions of this rule and rule 39, to mark a ballot paper (in these Rules referred to as a “tendered ballot paper”) in the same manner as any other voter.

Tendered ballot papers: general provisions

39.—(1) A tendered ballot paper must—

- (a) be of a colour differing from the other ballot papers;
- (b) instead of being put into the ballot box, be given to the presiding officer and endorsed by him with the name of the voter and his number in the register of electors, and set aside in a separate packet.

(2) The name of the voter and his number in the register of electors must be entered on a list (in these Rules referred to as the “tendered votes list”).

(3) The same list may be used for the principal area election and each relevant election or referendum and, where it is so used, an entry in that list shall be taken to mean that tendered ballot papers were marked in respect of each election or referendum, unless the list identifies the election or referendum at which a tendered ballot paper was marked.

(4) In the case of a person voting as proxy for an elector, the number to be endorsed or entered together with the voter’s name shall be the number of that elector.

(5) In the case of an elector who has an anonymous entry, this rule and rule 38 apply subject to the following modifications—

- (a) in paragraphs (1)(b) and (2) above, the references to the name of the voter shall be ignored;
- (b) otherwise, a reference to a person named on a register or list shall be construed as a reference to a person whose number appears on the register or list (as the case may be).

(6) In the case of a person in respect of whom a notice has been issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act, this rule and rule 38 shall apply as if—

- (a) in rule 38(1)(a), (2)(a) and (5)(a), for “named on the register” there were substituted “in respect of whom a notice under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act has been issued”;
- (b) in paragraph (1)(b) of this rule, for “his number in the register of electors” there were substituted “the number relating to him on a notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act”;

- (c) in paragraph (2) of this rule, for “his number in the register of electors” there were substituted “the number relating to him on a notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act”.

Spoilt ballot papers

40. A voter who has inadvertently dealt with his ballot paper in such manner that it cannot be conveniently used as a ballot paper may, on delivering it to the presiding officer and proving to his satisfaction the fact of the inadvertence, obtain another ballot paper in the place of the ballot paper so delivered (in these Rules referred to as “a spoilt ballot paper”), and the spoilt ballot paper must be immediately cancelled.

Correction of errors on day of poll

41.—(1) The presiding officer must keep a list of persons to whom ballot papers are delivered in consequence of an alteration to the register made by virtue of section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act which takes effect on the day of the poll.

(2) The same list may be used for each relevant election or referendum and, where it is so used, an entry in that list shall be taken to mean that ballot papers were issued in respect of each election or referendum, unless the list identifies the election or referendum for which a ballot paper was issued.

Adjournment of poll in case of riot

42.—(1) Where the proceedings at any polling station are interrupted or obstructed by riot or open violence, the presiding officer must adjourn the proceedings till the following day and must forthwith give notice to the returning officer who discharges the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations.

(2) Where the poll is adjourned at any polling station—

- (a) the hours of polling on the day to which it is adjourned must be the same as for the original day; and
- (b) references in these Rules to the close of the poll shall be construed accordingly.

Procedure on close of poll

43.—(1) As soon as practicable after the close of the poll, the presiding officer must, in the presence of the polling agents appointed for the purposes of the principal area election and those appointed for the purposes of each relevant election or referendum, make up into separate packets, sealed with his own seal and the seals of such polling agents as desire to affix their seals—

- (a) each ballot box in use at the station, sealed so as to prevent the introduction of additional ballot papers and unopened, but with the key, if any, attached,
- (b) the unused and spoilt ballot papers placed together,
- (c) the tendered ballot papers,
- (d) the marked copies of the register of electors (including any marked copy notices issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act) and of the list of proxies,
- (e) the lists prepared under rule 17 including the parts which were completed in accordance with rule 35(1)(b) (together referred to in these Rules as “the completed corresponding number lists”),
- (f) the certificates as to employment on duty on the day of the poll,
- (g) the tendered votes list, the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions, the list of votes marked by the presiding officer, a statement of the number of voters whose votes

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are so marked by the presiding officer under the heads “disability” and “unable to read”, the list maintained under rule 41 (correction of errors on day of poll) and the declarations made by the companions of voters with disabilities,

and must deliver the packets or cause them to be delivered to the returning officer to be taken charge of by him; but if the packets are not delivered by the presiding officer personally to the returning officer, the arrangements for their delivery shall require the returning officer’s approval.

(2) The contents of the packets referred to in sub-paragraphs (b), (c) and (f) of paragraph (1) must not be combined with the contents of the packets made under the corresponding rule that applies at any relevant election or referendum; nor shall the statement prepared under paragraph (5) be so combined.

(3) References to the returning officer in paragraph (1) are references to the returning officer who discharges the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations.

(4) The marked copies of the register of electors and of the list of proxies must be in one packet but must not be in the same packet as the completed corresponding number lists or the certificates as to employment on duty on the day of the poll.

(5) The packets must be accompanied by a statement (in these Rules referred to as “the ballot paper account”) made by the presiding officer showing the number of ballot papers entrusted to him, and accounting for them under the heads of ballot papers issued and not otherwise accounted for, unused, spoiled and tendered ballot papers.

CHAPTER 4

Counting of Votes

Attendance at counting of votes

44.—(1) Where the returning officer at the principal area election discharges the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations, he must—

- (a) make arrangements for—
 - (i) discharging the functions under rule 45(1) in the presence of the counting agents appointed for the purposes of the principal area election and those appointed for the purpose of each relevant election or referendum as soon as practicable after the close of the poll, and
 - (ii) thereafter counting the votes at the principal area election in the presence of the agents appointed for the purpose of that election; and
- (b) give to the counting agents appointed for the purposes of the principal area election and those appointed for the purpose of each relevant election or referendum notice in writing of the time and place at which he will begin to discharge the functions under rule 45(1).

(2) Where the returning officer at the principal area election does not discharge the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations, he must—

- (a) make arrangements for counting the votes in the presence of the counting agents as soon as practicable after the delivery of the ballot papers to him by the returning officer who does discharge those functions; and
 - (b) give to the counting agents notice in writing of the time after which he will begin to count the votes if by then he has received the ballot papers and of the place at which that count will take place.
- (3) No person other than—
- (a) the returning officer and his clerks,
 - (b) the candidates and one other person chosen by each of them,

- (c) the election agents,
- (d) the counting agents,
- (e) persons who are entitled to attend by virtue of any of sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000,

may be present at the counting of the votes, unless permitted by the returning officer to attend.

(4) No person other than a person entitled to be present at the counting of the votes at the principal area election under paragraphs (4) to (13) of rule 45 or at a relevant election or referendum may be present at the proceedings under rule 45(1) unless permitted by the returning officer to attend.

(5) A person not entitled to attend at the proceedings under rule 45(1) or the counting of the votes under paragraphs (4) to (13) of rule 45 must not be permitted to do so by the returning officer unless he—

- (a) is satisfied that the efficient separation of the ballot papers or, as the case may be, the efficient counting of the votes will not be impeded; and
- (b) has either consulted the election agents or thought it impracticable to do so.

(6) The returning officer must give the counting agents all such reasonable facilities for overseeing the proceedings, and all such information with respect to them, as he can give them consistently with the orderly conduct of the proceedings and the discharge of his duties in connection with them.

(7) In particular, where the votes are counted by sorting the ballot papers according to the candidate for whom the vote is given and then counting the number of ballot papers for each candidate, the counting agents shall be entitled to satisfy themselves that the ballot papers are correctly sorted.

The count

45.—(1) Where the returning officer at the principal area election discharges the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations, he must—

- (a) in the presence of the counting agents appointed for the purposes of the poll at the principal area election and each relevant election or referendum open each ballot box and record separately the number of ballot papers used in each election;
- (b) in the presence of the election agents appointed for the purposes of the poll at the principal area election and each relevant election or referendum verify each ballot paper account;
- (c) count such of the postal ballot papers as have been duly returned and record separately the number counted at the principal area election and each relevant election or referendum;
- (d) separate the ballot papers relating to the principal area election from the ballot papers relating to each relevant election or referendum;
- (e) make up into packets the ballot papers for each relevant election or referendum and seal them up in separate containers endorsing on each a description of the area to which the ballot papers relate;
- (f) deliver or cause to be delivered to the returning officer for the relevant election or referendum to which the ballot papers relate—
 - (i) those containers, together with a list of them and of the contents of each; and
 - (ii) the ballot paper accounts together with a copy of the statement as to the result of their verification in respect of that election; and
- (g) at the same time deliver or cause to be delivered to that officer packets that so relate containing—
 - (i) the unused and spoilt ballot papers,

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- (ii) the tendered ballot papers, and
- (iii) the certificates as to employment on duty on the day of the poll.

(2) In the application of paragraph (1) to combined polls at county and district council elections, it shall have effect as if after the words “principal area election” in the first place where they occur and in sub-paragraphs (a) to (d), there are inserted the words “for which he is the returning officer”.

(3) Where separate ballot boxes are used, no vote for any candidate shall be rendered invalid by the ballot paper being placed in the ballot box intended for use at any relevant election or referendum.

(4) After completion of the proceedings under paragraph (1), the returning officer must mix together all of the ballot papers used at the principal area election and count the votes given on them.

(5) Where the returning officer at the principal area election does not discharge the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations, he must—

- (a) on receipt of containers from the returning officer who does discharge those functions, and after the time specified in the notice given under rule 44(2)(b), in the presence of the counting agents open each container;
- (b) where the proceedings on the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers are not taken together with those proceedings at a relevant election or referendum under regulation 65 of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001⁽¹⁶⁾, or under that regulation as applied by regulations made under sections 44 and 105 or 45 and 105 of the Local Government Act 2000⁽¹⁷⁾, count such of the postal ballot papers as have been duly returned and record the number counted; and
- (c) mix together the postal ballot papers and the ballot papers from all of the containers and count the votes given on them,

and paragraph (11) shall not apply to these proceedings.

(6) A postal ballot paper must not be taken to be duly returned unless—

- (a) it is returned in the manner set out in paragraph (7) and reaches the returning officer or any polling station in the appropriate electoral area (as defined in paragraph (8)) before the close of the poll;
- (b) the postal voting statement, duly signed, is also returned in the manner set out in paragraph (7) and reaches him or such a polling station before that time;
- (c) the postal voting statement also states the date of birth of the elector or proxy (as the case may be); and
- (d) in a case where steps for verifying the date of birth and signature of an elector or proxy have been prescribed by regulations made under the 1983 Act⁽¹⁸⁾, the returning officer (having taken such steps) verifies the date of birth and signature of the elector or proxy.

(7) The manner in which any postal ballot paper or postal voting statement may be returned—

- (a) to the returning officer, is by hand or by post;
- (b) to a polling station, is by hand.

(8) The appropriate electoral area in respect of any voter shall be—

- (a) the area which is common to the parliamentary constituency⁽¹⁹⁾, electoral area, local counting area, local authority area or voting area (as the case may be) in which the polls

⁽¹⁶⁾ S.I. 2001/341

⁽¹⁷⁾ 2000 c.22. See the Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2002 (S.I. 2002/185) under section 44 and the Local Authorities (Conduct of Referendums) (England) Regulations 2001 (S.I. 2001/1298) under section 45.

⁽¹⁸⁾ See regulations 85 and 85A of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 (S.I. 2001/341), which were inserted by S.I. 2006/2910.

⁽¹⁹⁾ For the meaning of “parliamentary constituency”, see section 1 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (c.56).

at the principal area election and any relevant election or referendum are being taken together; and

(b) in respect of which polls the voter has been issued with a postal ballot paper.

(9) The returning officer must not count any tendered ballot papers.

(10) The returning officer, while counting and recording the number of ballot papers and counting the votes, must keep the ballot papers with their faces upwards and take all proper precautions for preventing any person from seeing the numbers or other unique identifying marks printed on the back of the papers.

(11) The returning officer must verify each ballot paper account by comparing it with the number of ballot papers recorded by him, and the unused and spoilt ballot papers in his possession and the tendered votes list (opening and resealing the packets containing the unused and spoilt ballot papers and the tendered votes list) and must draw up a statement as to the result of the verification, which any election agent may copy.

(12) The returning officer must so far as practicable proceed continuously with counting the votes, allowing only time for refreshment, except that he may exclude the hours between 7 in the evening and 9 on the following morning.

(13) During the time so excluded the returning officer must—

(a) place the ballot papers and other documents relating to the election under his own seal and the seals of such of the counting agents as desire to affix their seals; and

(b) otherwise take proper precautions for the security of the papers and documents.

Re-count

46.—(1) A candidate or his election agent may, if present when the counting or any re-count of the votes is completed, require the returning officer to have the votes re-counted or again re-counted but the returning officer may refuse to do so if in his opinion the request is unreasonable.

(2) No step shall be taken on the completion of the counting or any re-count of votes until the candidates and election agents present at its completion have been given a reasonable opportunity to exercise the right conferred by this rule.

Rejected ballot papers

47.—(1) Any ballot paper—

(a) which does not bear the official mark, or

(b) on which votes are given for more candidates than the voter is entitled to vote for, or

(c) on which anything is written or marked by which the voter can be identified except the printed number on the back and other unique identifying mark, or

(d) which is unmarked or void for uncertainty,

shall, subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), be void and not counted.

(2) Where the voter is entitled to vote for more than one candidate, a ballot paper shall not be deemed to be void for uncertainty as respects any vote as to which no uncertainty arises and that vote must be counted.

(3) A ballot paper on which the vote is marked—

(a) elsewhere than in the proper place, or

(b) otherwise than by means of a cross, or

(c) by more than one mark,

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shall not for such reason be deemed to be void (either wholly or as respects that vote) if an intention that the vote shall be for one or other of the candidates clearly appears, and the way the paper is marked does not itself identify the voter and it is not shown that he can be identified by it.

(4) The returning officer must—

- (a) endorse the word “rejected” on any ballot paper which under this rule is not to be counted; and
- (b) in the case of a ballot paper on which any vote is counted under paragraph (2), endorse the words “rejected in part” on the ballot paper and indicate which vote or votes have been counted,

and must add to the endorsement the words “rejection objected to” if any objection is made by a counting agent to his decision.

(5) The returning officer must draw up a statement showing the number of ballot papers rejected, including those rejected in part, under the several heads of—

- (a) want of official mark;
- (b) voting for more candidates than voter is entitled to;
- (c) writing or mark by which the voter could be identified;
- (d) unmarked or void for uncertainty,

and the statement must record the number of ballot papers rejected in part.

Decisions on ballot papers

48. The decision of the returning officer on any question arising in respect of a ballot paper shall be final, but shall be subject to review on an election petition.

Equality of votes

49. Where, after the counting of the votes (including any re-count) is completed, an equality of votes is found to exist between any candidates and the addition of a vote would entitle any of those candidates to be declared elected, the returning officer must forthwith decide between those candidates by lot, and proceed as if the candidate on whom the lot falls had received an additional vote.

PART 4

Final Proceedings in Contested and Uncontested Elections

Declaration of result

50.—(1) In a contested election, when the result of the poll has been ascertained, the returning officer must forthwith—

- (a) declare to be elected the candidate or candidates to whom more votes have been given than to the other candidates, up to the number of councillors to be elected;
- (b) give notice of the name of each candidate to whom sub-paragraph (a) applies to the proper officer of the council for which the election is held; and
- (c) give public notice of the name of each candidate elected and of the total number of votes given for each candidate (whether elected or not) together with the number of rejected ballot papers under each head shown in the statement of rejected ballot papers.

(2) In an uncontested election, the returning officer must as soon as practicable after the latest time for the delivery of notices of withdrawals of candidature—

- (a) declare to be elected the person or persons remaining validly nominated;
- (b) give notice of the name of each person to whom sub-paragraph (a) applies to the proper officer of the council for which the election is held; and
- (c) give public notice of the name of each such person.

PART 5

Disposal of Documents

Sealing up of ballot papers

51.—(1) On the completion of the counting at a contested election the returning officer must seal up in separate packets the counted and rejected ballot papers, including ballot papers rejected in part.

(2) The returning officer must not open the sealed packets of—

- (a) tendered ballot papers, or
- (b) certificates as to employment on duty on the day of the poll.

(3) Where the returning officer discharges the functions referred to in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations, he must also not open the sealed packets of—

- (a) the completed corresponding number lists, or
- (b) the marked copies of the register of electors (including any marked copy notices issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act) and lists of proxies.

Delivery of documents to relevant registration officer

52.—(1) The returning officer must then forward to the relevant registration officer the following documents—

- (a) the packets of ballot papers in his possession,
- (b) the ballot paper accounts and the statements of rejected ballot papers and of the result of the verification of the ballot paper accounts,
- (c) the tendered votes lists, the lists of voters with disabilities assisted by companions, the lists of votes marked by the presiding officer and the related statements, the lists maintained under rule 41, and the declarations made by the companions of voters with disabilities,
- (d) the packets of the completed corresponding number lists,
- (e) the packets of certificates as to employment on duty on the day of the poll, and
- (f) the packets containing marked copies of registers (including any marked copy notices issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act) and of the postal voters list, of the lists of proxies and of the proxy postal voters list.

(2) At an election where the returning officer does not discharge the functions referred to in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations, paragraph (1) shall have effect as if sub-paragraphs (c), (d) and (e) were omitted.

(3) In this rule and in rules 53, 54 and 55 references to the relevant registration officer are to—

- (a) the registration officer of the local authority in whose area the principal area election is held;

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- (b) if the electoral area of the relevant election or referendum comprises any part of the area of more than one local authority, the registration officer of the local authority in whose area the greater or greatest (as the case may be) number of electors is registered;
- (c) if the returning officer discharges the functions referred to in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations, the registration officer of the local authority in whose area the principal area election is held,

and for these purposes “local authority” does not include the Greater London Authority.

Orders for production of documents

53.—(1) An order—

- (a) for the inspection or production of any rejected ballot papers, including ballot papers rejected in part, in the custody of the relevant registration officer, or
- (b) for the opening of a sealed packet of the completed corresponding number lists or certificates as to employment on duty on the day of the poll or for the inspection of any counted ballot papers in his custody,

may be made by a county court, if the court is satisfied by evidence on oath that the order is required for the purpose of instituting or maintaining a prosecution for an offence in relation to ballot papers, or for the purpose of an election petition.

(2) An order for the opening of a sealed packet of the completed corresponding number lists or certificates as to employment on duty on the day of the poll or for the inspection of any counted ballot papers in the custody of the relevant registration officer may be made by an election court.

(3) An order under this rule may be made subject to such conditions as to—

- (a) persons,
- (b) time,
- (c) place and mode of inspection,
- (d) production or opening,

as the court making the order may think expedient; but in making and carrying into effect an order for the opening of a packet of the completed corresponding number lists or certificates as to employment on duty on the day of the poll or for the inspection of counted ballot papers, care must be taken that the way in which the vote of any particular elector has been given shall not be disclosed until it has been proved—

- (i) that his vote was given; and
- (ii) that the vote has been declared by a competent court to be invalid.

(4) An appeal lies to the High Court from any order of a county court under this rule.

(5) Any power given under this rule to a county court may be exercised by any judge of the court otherwise than in open court.

(6) Where an order is made for the production by the relevant registration officer of any document in his possession relating to any specified election—

- (a) the production by him or his agent of the document ordered in such manner as may be directed by that order shall be conclusive evidence that the document relates to the specified election; and
- (b) any endorsement on any packet of ballot papers so produced shall be prima facie evidence that the ballot papers are what they are stated to be by the endorsement.

(7) The production from proper custody of—

- (a) a ballot paper purporting to have been used at any election, and

- (b) a completed corresponding number list with a number marked in writing beside the number of the ballot paper,

shall be prima facie evidence that the elector whose vote was given by that ballot paper was the person whose entry in the register of electors or on a notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act at the time of the election contained the same number as the number written as mentioned in subparagraph (b) of this paragraph.

(8) Save as by this rule provided, no person shall be allowed to inspect any rejected or counted ballot papers in the possession of the relevant registration officer or open any sealed packets of the completed corresponding number lists or of certificates as to employment on duty on the day of the poll.

Retention of documents

54. The relevant registration officer must retain for one year all documents relating to an election forwarded to him in pursuance of these Rules by a returning officer, and then, unless otherwise directed by an order of a county court, the Crown Court, a magistrates' court or an election court, must cause them to be destroyed.

PART 6

Death of Candidate

Countermand or abandonment of poll on death of a candidate

55.—(1) If at a contested election proof is given to the returning officer's satisfaction before the result of the election is declared that one of the persons named or to be named as candidate in the ballot papers has died, then the returning officer must countermand notice of the poll or, if polling has begun, direct that the poll be abandoned, and the provisions of subsections (1) and (5) of section 39 of the 1983 Act(20) apply in respect of any vacancy which remains unfilled.

(2) Neither the countermand of the poll at the principal area election nor the direction that that poll be abandoned shall affect the poll at each relevant election or referendum.

(3) Where the poll at the principal area election is abandoned by reason of a candidate's death, no further ballot papers shall be issued.

(4) At the close of the poll at each relevant election or referendum the presiding officer must take the like steps (so far as not already taken) for the delivery to the returning officer of ballot boxes and ballot papers and other documents as he would be required to do if the poll at the principal area election had not been abandoned.

(5) The returning officer must dispose of ballot papers used at the principal area election (at which a candidate has died) as he is required to do on the completion in due course of the counting of the votes, subject to paragraphs (6) and (7).

(6) It is not necessary for any ballot paper account at that election to be prepared or verified.

(7) Having separated the ballot papers relating to each relevant election or referendum, the returning officer must take no step or further step for the counting of the ballot papers used at the principal area election (at which a candidate has died) or of the votes cast at that principal area election.

(20) Subsection (1) of section 39 was amended by the Local Government Act 1985 (c.51), Schedule 17, and the Representation of the People Act 1985 (c.50), section 19(2).

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(8) The returning officer must seal up all the ballot papers used at the principal area election (whether the votes on them have been counted or not) and it shall not be necessary to seal up counted and rejected ballot papers in separate packets.

(9) The provisions of these Rules as to the inspection, production, retention and destruction of ballot papers and other documents by the relevant registration officer relating to a poll at a principal area election apply to any such documents relating to a poll abandoned by reason of a candidate's death subject to paragraphs (10) and (11).

(10) Ballot papers on which the votes were neither counted nor rejected must be treated as counted ballot papers.

(11) No order is to be made for—

(a) the production or inspection of any ballot papers, or

(b) for the opening of a sealed packet of the completed corresponding number lists or of certificates as to employment on duty on the day of the poll,

unless the order is made by a court with reference to a prosecution.

PART 7

Appendix of Forms

Note:—The forms contained in this Appendix may be adapted so far as circumstances require.

— Form of Nomination Paper

Form of Candidate's Consent to Nomination

Form of Front of Ballot Paper

Form of Back of Ballot Paper

Directions as to Printing the Ballot Paper

Corresponding Number List M1

Corresponding Number List M2

Form of Postal Voting Statement (for use where there is joint issue and receipt of postal ballot papers)

Form of Postal Voting Statement (for use when a local government poll is combined with another poll but the postal ballot papers are not combined)

Official Poll Card (to be sent to an elector voting in person)

Official Postal Poll Card (to be sent to an elector voting by post)

Official Proxy Poll Card (to be sent to an appointed proxy voting in person)

Official Proxy Postal Poll Card (to be sent to an appointed proxy voting by post)

Form of directions for the guidance of the voters in voting

Form of Certificate of Employment

Form of declaration to be made by the companion of a voter with disabilities

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Rule 4

Local Government Elections Form of Nomination Paper

| Office Use Only | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------|
| Date delivered | Time delivered | Initials |
| | | |

*ELECTION OF COUNCILLORS/A COUNCILLOR for the

*Electoral division/ward of the *county/district/London borough/county borough of

**Delete whichever is inappropriate*

Date of election.....

We, the undersigned, being local government electors for the said *electoral division/ward do hereby nominate the under-mentioned person as a candidate at the said election.

| Candidate's surname | Other forenames in full | Commonly used surname (if any) | Commonly used forenames (if any) | Description (if any) use no more than six words | Home Address in full |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| | | | | | |

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr/Other

| | | Electoral Number | |
|---|------------|------------------|--------|
| Signature | Print Name | Polling District | Number |
| Proposer | | | |
| Seconder | | | |
| We, the undersigned being local government electors for the said *electoral division/ward, do hereby assent to the foregoing nomination | | | |
| Signature | | | |
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | | | |

NOTES

1. The attention of candidates and electors is drawn to the rules for filling up nomination papers and other provisions relating to nomination papers contained in the elections rules in Schedule 3 to the Local Elections (Principal Areas) Rules 2006.
2. Where a candidate is commonly known by some title they may be described by their title as if it were their surname.
3. Where a candidate commonly uses a name which is different from any other name they have, the commonly used name may also appear on the nomination paper, but if it does so, the commonly used name (instead of any other name) will appear on the ballot paper
4. But the ballot paper will show the other name if the returning officer thinks that the use of the commonly used name may
 - (a) be likely to mislead or confuse electors, or
 - (b) that the commonly used name is obscene or offensive.
5. The description, if any, can only be
 - (a) one certified as an authorised or registered description as mentioned in rule 5 of the election rules, or
 - (b) the word "Independent".

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6. An elector may not –
 - (a) subscribe more nomination papers than there are vacancies to be filled in the electoral area in which the election is held; or
 - (b) subscribe a nomination paper for more than one electoral area in the same *county/district/London borough/county borough.
7. In this form “elector” –
 - (a) means a person whose name is registered in the register of local government electors for the electoral area in question on the last day for the publication of notice of election; and
 - (b) includes a person then shown in the register as below voting age if (but only if) it appears from the register that he will be of voting age on the day fixed for the poll.
8. However, a person who has an anonymous entry in the register of local government electors cannot nominate a candidate for election.

**Delete whichever is inappropriate*

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Local Government Elections
Form of Candidate's Consent to Nomination

Front of form

Date of election

I (name in full).....

Of (home address in full).....

hereby consent to my nomination as a candidate for election as councillor for the
*(..... electoral division/ward) of the *county/district/London borough/county
borough of

**Delete whichever is inappropriate*

I declare that on the day of my nomination I am qualified and that, if there is a poll on the day of election, I will be qualified to be so elected by virtue of being on that day or those days a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a citizen of another Member State of the European Community, who has attained the age of 18 years and that

* (a) I am registered as a local government elector for the area of the *county/district/or London borough/county borough named above in respect of (qualifying address in full)

and my electoral number (see Note below) is.....; or

* (b) I have during the whole of the 12 months preceding that day or those days occupied as owner or tenant of the following land or other premises in the area [description and address of land or premises]; or

* (c) my principal or only place of work during those 12 months has been in that *county/district/London borough/county borough at [give address of place of work and, where appropriate, name of employer]; or

* (d) I have during the whole of those twelve months resided in that area at (give address in full)

.....

**Delete whichever is inappropriate*

I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief I am not disqualified for being elected by reason of any disqualification set out in section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 or any decision made under section 79 of the Local Government Act 2000, (copies of which are printed overleaf) and I do not hold a politically restricted post, within the meaning of Part 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, under a local authority, within the meaning of that Part.

Date of birth

Signature

Date of consent

Signed in my presence

Signature of witness

Name and address of witness
(WRITE CLEARLY)

Notes

1. A person's electoral number is his number in the register to be used at the election (including the distinctive letter of the parliamentary polling district in which he is registered).
2. A candidate who is qualified by more than one qualification may complete any of those that may apply.

Back of form

Set out sections 80 and 81 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 79 of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended from time to time).

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Rule 16

Local Government Elections
Form of Front of Ballot Paper

VOTE FOR NO MORE THAN CANDIDATES

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | BASWRA Paresh Baswra 20 Kincaid Road, Small Heath, Birmingham B10 9JG Liberal Democrat |  | |
| 2 | CRANLEY Alana Cranley 4 Kennil Road, Perry Bar, Birmingham B32 5JJ Green Party |  | |
| 3 | EDGBASTON Richard Edgbaston 6 Tagwood Lane, Small Heath, Birmingham B10 0BH The Common Good Party |  | |
| 4 | GUNNIL-WALKER Roger Gunnil-Walker 33 Horsemeadow Lane, Sheldon, Birmingham B25 3GD The Labour Party Candidate |  | |
| 5 | SMITH CATHERINE ANGELINA Smith 21 Terminal Grove, Selly Oak, Birmingham B32 5JP Independent | | |
| 6 | SMITH KEITH JAMES Smith The Links, 3 Kingsdown Road, Birmingham B44 4JN The Conservative Party Candidate |  | |

Form of Back of Ballot Paper

Number
 Other Unique Identifying Mark
 Election for the *(..... electoral division/ward) of the
 *(county/district/London borough/county borough) of
 on 20 ..
**Delete whichever is inappropriate*

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Rule 16(2)

Local Government Elections

Directions as to Printing the Ballot Paper

1. Nothing is to be printed on the ballot paper except in accordance with these directions.
2. So far as practicable, the following arrangements shall be observed in the printing of the ballot paper:-
 - (a) no word shall be printed on the face except the direction 'VOTE FOR NO MORE THAN..... CANDIDATES' or, where only one candidate is to be elected, 'VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE ONLY', the particulars of the candidates and words forming part of emblems;
 - (b) no rule shall be printed on the face except the horizontal rule separating the direction mentioned in paragraph (a) above from the particulars of the candidates and the horizontal rules separating the particulars of the candidates from one another and the vertical rules separating those particulars from the numbers on the left-hand-side and the spaces on the right where the vote is to be marked;
 - (c) the whole space between the top and bottom of the paper shall be equally divided between the direction mentioned in paragraph (a) above and each of the candidates by the horizontal rules mentioned in paragraph (b) above.

Nothing in paragraph 2 prohibits the face of the ballot paper containing more than one column of numbers, candidate's particulars and spaces where the vote is to be marked. If the returning officer thinks it is appropriate for the ballot paper to be printed with more than one column, in such a case, each column must be separated by a double vertical rule.

3. The direction mentioned in paragraph 2(a) above shall be printed in large capitals.
4. The surname of each candidate shall in all cases be printed by itself in large capitals, and their full particulars shall be set out below it and shall be printed in ordinary type except that small capitals shall be used –
 - (a) if the surname is the same as another candidate's, for their other names; and
 - (b) if the other names are also the same as the other candidate's, either for their home address or for their description unless each of them is the same as that of another candidate with the same surname and other names.
5. Where an emblem is to be printed against a candidate's particulars –
 - (a) it shall be printed between the candidate's particulars and the vertical rule separating the candidate's particulars from the spaces where the vote is to be marked; and
 - (b) its size as printed shall not exceed two centimetres square.
6. The number and other unique identifying mark shall be printed on the back of the ballot paper.

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Rule 22

Form of Postal Voting Statement
(for use where there is a joint issue and receipt of postal ballot papers)

Postal Voting Statement

*Voter's name: Ballot paper Nos.
*(Returning Officer to insert name but omit where ballot papers sent to an anonymous elector)
[other identifying marks]

You must provide your [# signature and] date of birth. If you do not, the postal voting statement will be invalid and your vote will not be counted.

I AM THE PERSON THE BALLOT PAPERS NUMBERED ABOVE WERE SENT TO

Date of birth [D][D][M][M][Y][Y][Y][Y] (voter's date of birth)

#Signature [Signature Here] (voter's signature)
IMPORTANT – Keep signature within border

*(Returning Officer to omit where a person has been granted a waiver)

Electoral fraud is a crime. You must not vote using a ballot paper that is not addressed to you or interfere with another voter's ballot paper.

PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS TO THE VOTER

Issued by the Returning Officer

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE VOTER

Complete the ballot paper yourself and in private. If you need help contact the Returning Officer's staff as shown below

[contact details for assistance
include address as appropriate]

- 1. You must provide your [# signature and] date of birth. If you do not, this postal voting statement will be invalid and your vote(s) will not be counted.
- 2. When you are voting in a local government election ([insert colour of ballot paper] ballot paper), mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of each ballot paper opposite the name of each candidate(s) you are voting for. [Vote for ONE candidate only]*[Vote for no more than [...] candidates]*.
- 3. When you are voting in a Parliamentary election ([insert colour of ballot paper] ballot paper), mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate you are voting for. Vote for ONE candidate only.
- 4. When you are voting in a European Parliamentary election ([insert colour of ballot paper] ballot paper), mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the name of the party or individual candidate of your choice. Vote for ONE party or candidate only.
- 5. [#* When you are voting in a Greater London Authority election—
(a) [* in the constituency members' election ([insert colour of ballot paper] ballot paper), mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the name of the party or individual candidate of your choice. Vote for ONE candidate only.]
(b) [* in the London members' election ([insert colour of ballot paper] ballot paper), mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the name of the party or individual

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candidate of your choice. Vote for ONE party or candidate only.]

(c) [* in the London Mayoral election ([insert colour of ballot paper] ballot paper), vote ONCE in column one for your FIRST CHOICE and ONCE in column two for your SECOND CHOICE.]]

6. [* When you are voting in a [* specify] election ([insert colour of ballot paper] ballot paper), mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the name of the candidate of your choice. Vote for ONE candidate only/Vote ONCE in column one for your FIRST CHOICE and ONCE in column two for your SECOND CHOICE.*]
7. [* When you are voting in a referendum, mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the answer of your choice. Vote ONCE only.]
8. Do not mark your ballot papers in any other way or your votes may not be counted.
9. If you need help voting, the person helping you must not tell anyone how you voted.
10. Put all the ballot papers in the small envelope marked **A** and seal it.
11. Complete the postal voting statement by signing it, and providing your date of birth.
12. Then put the envelope marked **A** together with the postal voting statement in the larger envelope marked **B**. Return it straightaway.

After receiving this postal vote, you cannot vote in person at a polling station at this election.

If you accidentally spoil any of your ballot papers, you can apply to the Returning Officer for a replacement before 5 p.m. on [day/date of poll]. You must return all the ballot papers, the postal voting statement, and the envelopes marked **A** and **B**. Make sure you contact the Returning Officer as soon as possible.

! Your ballot papers and the postal voting statement must be received by the Returning Officer by 10pm on [day/date of poll]. You can deliver your completed postal vote to any polling station in your electoral area/ward on polling day.

Electoral fraud is a crime. You must not vote using a ballot paper that is not addressed to you or interfere with another voter's ballot papers.

It is illegal to vote more than once (unless you are appointed as a proxy for another elector) at the same election.

*(Returning Officer to omit where a person has been granted a waiver)

* Delete whichever is inappropriate

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

Rule 22

Form of Postal Voting Statement
(for use when a local government poll is combined with another poll
but the postal ballot papers are not combined)

Postal Voting Statement

*Voter's name: Ballot paper No. (Colour)
*(Returning Officer to insert name but omit where ballot papers sent to an anonymous elector)
[other identifying mark]

You must provide your [# signature and] date of birth. If you do not, the postal voting statement will be invalid and your vote will not be counted.

I AM THE PERSON THE BALLOT PAPER NUMBERED ABOVE WAS SENT TO

Date of birth

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| D | D | M | M | Y | Y | Y | Y |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

 (voter's date of birth)

Signature

| |
|----------------|
| Signature Here |
|----------------|

 (voter's signature)
IMPORTANT – Keep signature within border

*(Returning Officer to omit where a person has been granted a waiver)

Electoral fraud is a crime. You must not vote using a ballot paper that is not addressed to you or interfere with another voter's ballot paper.

PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS TO THE VOTER

Issued by the Returning Officer

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE VOTER

Complete the ballot paper yourself and in private. If you need help contact the Returning Officer's staff as shown below

[contact details for assistance
include address as appropriate]

1. You must provide your [# signature and] date of birth. You must do this even if you have already signed a postal voting statement in respect of another election to be held on the same day. If you do not, this postal voting statement will be invalid and your vote(s) will not be counted.
2. [Vote for no more than [...] candidates] [Vote for ONE candidate only]. Do not mark the ballot paper in any other way or your vote(s) may not be counted.
3. Mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate(s) you are voting for.
4. If you need help voting, the person helping you must not tell anyone how you voted.
5. Different colours are used for the ballot papers for each election [and referendum*]. Each ballot paper has its own ballot paper envelope (marked **A**), postal voting statement and return envelope (marked **B**). The return envelope and postal voting statement for each ballot paper refer to the colour of that ballot paper. It is important that you use the correct envelopes and postal voting statement or your vote may not be counted. You may find it helpful to sort the documents into separate sets.
6. Put the ballot paper in the small envelope marked **A** and seal it.
7. Complete the postal voting statement by signing it, and providing your date of birth.

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8. Then put the envelope marked **A** together with the postal voting statement in the larger envelope marked **B**. Return it straightaway.

After receiving this postal vote, you cannot vote in person at a polling station at this election.

If you accidentally spoil your ballot paper, you can apply to the Returning Officer for a replacement before 5 p.m. on [day/date of poll]. You must return the spoiled ballot paper, the postal voting statement, and the envelopes marked **A** and **B**. Make sure you contact the Returning Officer as soon as possible.

! Your ballot paper and the postal voting statement must be received by the Returning Officer by 10pm on [day/date of poll]. You can deliver your completed postal vote to any polling station in your electoral area/ward on polling day.

Electoral fraud is a crime. You must not vote using a ballot paper that is not addressed to you or interfere with another voter's ballot paper.

It is illegal to vote more than once (unless you are appointed as a proxy for another elector) at the same election.

#(Returning Officer to omit where a person has been granted a waiver)

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| | | |
|---|---|----------------|
| OFFICIAL POLL CARD (to be sent to an elector voting in person) <i>Front of card</i> | | Rule 25 |
| OFFICIAL POLL CARD | | |
| Council: Electoral division/ward: Polling Day: Polling hours: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Your polling station will be: | Number on register: *Name *Address *(Returning Officer to omit where poll card sent to an anonymous elector. Poll card to anonymous elector must be delivered in a sealed envelope.) | |
| *This card is for information only. You can vote without it, but it will save you time if you take it to the polling station and show it to the clerk there. SEE FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE BACK OF THIS CARD <i>Back of card</i> | | |
| LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION | | |
| <p>*When you go to the polling station, tell the clerk your name and address, as shown on the front of the card.</p> <p>*The clerk will confirm your details on the register.</p> <p>When you are given your ballot paper, go to one of the polling booths. Mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name(s) of the candidate(s) you are voting for.</p> <p>[Vote for no more than [...] candidates] [Vote for ONE candidate only]. Do not put any other mark on the ballot paper, or your vote may not be counted.</p> <p>If you spoil your ballot paper by mistake, show it to the presiding officer and ask for a replacement.</p> <p>Fold the ballot paper in two. Show the presiding officer the number and other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper, but do not let anyone see your vote. Put the ballot paper in the ballot box and leave the polling station.</p> <p>If you will be away on the date of the poll –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can apply to vote by post. Your application must be received by the Returning Officer before 5pm on [-11 day/date deadline]. If you are given a postal vote, you will not be entitled to vote in person at this election. • You can apply to vote by proxy (this means someone else can vote on your behalf). Your application must be received before 5pm on [-6 day/date deadline]. If you appoint a proxy, you can still vote in this election yourself if you do so before your proxy has voted for you. <p>In certain circumstances it may be possible to apply to vote by proxy after [-6 day/date deadline]. To change any of your voting arrangements please contact [helpline number] as soon as possible.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Issued by the Returning Officer</p> <p>[Where poll card sent to an anonymous elector substitute for the paragraphs marked with * above:- You must have this card with you when you vote. You cannot vote without it.</p> <p>When you go to the polling station, ask to speak to the presiding officer and show them this card.</p> <p>The presiding officer will confirm your entry on the register].</p> | | |

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

| | |
|---|--|
| OFFICIAL POSTAL POLL CARD Rule 25 (to be sent to an elector voting by post) <i>Front of card</i> | |
| OFFICIAL POSTAL POLL CARD | |
| Council: Electoral division/ward: For the election on: [day/date] Number on Register: *Name and Address: *(Returning Officer to omit where poll card sent to an anonymous elector. Poll card to anonymous elector must be delivered in a sealed envelope.) | This notice is to tell you that you have asked to vote by post for this election, and you will not be able to vote in a polling station. If you want to cancel your postal vote please the helpline number shown below before 5pm on [-11 day/date deadline]. We will send your postal voting papers around [day/date]. Addressed to: (Name and Address) If your postal voting papers have not arrived by [day/date] call: [helpline number] and ask for help. |
| If you lose or accidentally spoil your postal ballot paper, please call the helpline number shown above as soon as possible. Replacement ballot papers can only be issued before 5 p.m. on [day/date of poll]. | |
| This card is to provide you with information about voting by post. SEE INFORMATION ON THE BACK OF THIS CARD <i>Back of card</i> | |
| LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION | |
| When you receive your postal voting pack, please read the instructions with it carefully before completing your postal ballot paper. Do not let anyone see your vote. If you need help voting, the person helping you must not tell anyone how you have voted. You can get independent help from the Returning Officer please call the helpline number shown below. You must sign the postal voting statement (unless you have been granted a waiver by prior arrangement with the Returning Officer) and provide your date of birth. This is a security measure. It will not affect your vote or mean it can be identified. Without your signature and date of birth the statement will not be valid and your vote will not be counted. The Returning Officer can cross check your signature against other records that they hold. If you lose or accidentally spoil your ballot paper, please call the helpline number shown below as soon as possible. We can only issue replacement postal ballot papers before 5 p.m. on [day/date of poll]. Complete and return your postal vote as soon as possible. The Returning Officer must receive your postal vote by 10pm on [day/date of poll]. You can deliver your completed voting papers to any polling station in the electoral area. If you want to vote in person at these elections, you must cancel your postal vote before 5 p.m. on [-11 day/date deadline]. If you need any assistance, please call our helpline on: [helpline number]. <p style="text-align: center;">It is an offence to vote using a ballot paper that was not addressed to you.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Issued by the Returning Officer</p> | |

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>OFFICIAL PROXY POLL CARD Rule 25 (to be sent to an appointed proxy voting in person) <i>Front of card</i></p> | |
| <p>OFFICIAL PROXY POLL CARD</p> | |
| <p>Council: Electoral division/ward: Polling Day: Polling hours: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Elector's polling station will be:</p> | <p>*This poll card is to tell you that for this election, the elector named on the back of this card has appointed you as their proxy. *Proxy's name *Proxy's address *(Returning Officer to omit where poll card sent to the proxy of an anonymous elector. Poll card to proxy of anonymous elector must be delivered in a sealed envelope.)</p> |
| <p>*This card is for information only. You can vote without it, but it will save time if you take it to the polling station and show it to the clerk there. SEE FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE BACK OF THIS CARD <i>Back of card</i></p> | |
| <p>LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION</p> | |
| <p>*This poll card is to tell you that for this election you are appointed as proxy for: *(Elector's name) *(Elector's address) *(Elector's number on register)</p> <p>*When you go to the polling station, tell the clerk that you wish to vote as proxy on behalf of the voter shown above. The clerk will confirm the details on the register.</p> <p>When you are given the ballot paper, go to one of the polling booths. Mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name(s) of the candidate(s) the elector is voting for.</p> <p>[Vote for no more than [...] candidates] [Vote for ONE candidate only]. Do not put any other mark on the ballot paper, or the vote may not be counted.</p> <p>If you spoil the ballot paper by mistake, show it to the presiding officer and ask for a replacement.</p> <p>Fold the ballot paper in two. Show the presiding officer the number and other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper, but do not let anyone see the vote. Put the ballot paper in the ballot box and leave the polling station.</p> <p>If you will be away on the date of the poll, you can apply before 5pm on [-11 day/date deadline] to vote by post. If you are given a postal vote, you or the elector will <i>not</i> be entitled to vote in person at this election.</p> <p>The person who appointed you as proxy may vote at this election. If they wish to do so they must vote in person before you vote on their behalf.</p> | |

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

It is illegal to do any of the following:

- Vote more than once (unless you are appointed as a proxy for another elector) at the same election.
- Vote as a proxy at the same election for two or more persons unless you are their spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild.
- Vote as a proxy for a person if you know that the person is subject to a legal incapacity to vote.

If you need any assistance, please call our helpline on: *[helpline number]*.

Issued by the Returning Officer

*[Where poll card sent to the proxy of an anonymous elector substitute for the text marked with * above:-*

You must have this card with you when you vote, you cannot vote as proxy without it.

You are entitled to vote as proxy for the elector whose electoral number is shown below:

.....
(Elector's number on register)

To vote as proxy you must go to the polling station shown on the front of this card. Ask to speak to the presiding officer and show them this card].

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

| | |
|--|--|
| OFFICIAL PROXY POSTAL POLL CARD Rule 25 (to be sent to an appointed proxy voting by post) <i>Front of card</i> | |
| OFFICIAL PROXY POSTAL POLL CARD | |
| Council: Electoral division/ward: For the election on: [day/date] Name and Address (Proxy): | This poll card is to tell you that for this election, the elector named on the back of this card has appointed you as their proxy and you have decided to vote by post. You will not be able to vote on behalf of the elector in a polling station. If you want to cancel this postal vote and vote in person on polling day, please call the helpline number shown below before 5pm on [-11 day/date deadline]. We will send the proxy postal voting papers around [day/date]. If the postal voting papers have not arrived by [day/date] please call: [helpline number] and ask for help. |
| If you lose or accidentally spoil the elector's postal ballot paper, please call the helpline number shown above as soon as possible. Replacement ballot papers can only be issued before 5pm on [day/date of poll]. | |
| This card is to provide you with information about voting by post. SEE INFORMATION ON THE BACK OF THIS CARD <i>Back of card</i> | |
| LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION | |
| <p>*This poll card is to tell you that for this election you are appointed as proxy for the elector named below and you have decided to vote by post.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>*(Elector's name)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>*(Elector's address)</p> <p>When you receive the postal voting pack, please read the instructions with it carefully before completing the postal ballot paper.</p> <p>Do not let anyone see your vote. If you need help voting, the person helping you must not tell anyone how you have voted.</p> <p>You must sign the postal voting statement (unless you have been granted a waiver by prior arrangement with the Returning Officer) and provide your date of birth. This is a security measure. It will not affect your vote or mean it can be identified. Without your signature and date of birth the statement will not be valid and your vote will not be counted. The Returning Officer can cross check your signature against other records they hold.</p> <p>If you lose or accidentally spoil the postal ballot paper, please call the helpline number shown below as soon as possible. We can only issue replacement postal ballot papers before 5pm on [day/date of poll].</p> <p>Complete and return the postal vote as soon as possible. The Returning Officer must receive the postal vote by 10pm on [day/date of poll]. You can deliver your completed voting papers to any polling station in your electoral area/ward.</p> <p>If you want to vote in person as a proxy at these elections, you must cancel your postal vote before 5 p.m. on [-11 day/date deadline].</p> | |

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

It is illegal to do any of the following:

- Vote more than once (unless you are appointed as a proxy for another elector) at the same election.
- Vote as a proxy at the same election for two or more persons unless you are their spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild.
- Vote as a proxy for a person if you know that the person is subject to a legal incapacity to vote.

If you need any assistance, please call our helpline on: *[helpline number]*.

Issued by the Returning Officer

*[Where poll card sent to the proxy of an anonymous elector substitute for the text marked with * above:-*

This poll card is to tell you that for this election you are appointed as proxy for the elector whose electoral number is shown below and you have decided to vote by post.

You are entitled to vote as proxy for the elector whose electoral number is shown below:

.....
(Elector's number on register)].

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

Rule 26(8)

Local Government Elections
Form of directions for the guidance of the voters in voting

GUIDANCE FOR VOTERS AT COMBINED POLLS

1. When you are given your ballot papers go to one of the polling booths.
2.
 - A. At the Parliamentary election mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate you are voting for. Vote for ONE candidate only.
 - B. [At the local government election(s) mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of each ballot paper opposite the name of each candidate you are voting for. [Vote for ONE candidate only]*[Vote for no more than ... candidates]*].
 - C. [At the European Parliamentary election, mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the party or individual candidate you are voting for. Vote for ONE party or candidate only.]*
 - #D. [At the Greater London Authority election—
 - (i) in the constituency members' election, vote for ONE candidate only]*
 - (ii) in the London members' election, vote for ONE party or individual candidate only]*
 - (iii) in the London Mayoral election, vote ONCE in column one for your FIRST CHOICE and ONCE in column two for your SECOND CHOICE.]**
 - +E. [At the [specify other] election mark a cross (X) in the box on the right hand side of the ballot paper opposite the name of the candidate for whom you are voting. [Vote ONCE only]*[Vote ONCE in column one for your FIRST CHOICE and ONCE in column two for your SECOND CHOICE]*]*.
 - F. [At the referendum mark a cross (X) in the box on the right of the answer of your choice. Vote ONCE only.]*
3. [Please do not fold the ballot papers for the [specify the election(s) at which the votes are to be counted electronically]. Fold any other ballot paper(s) in two. Show the presiding officer the number and other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper, but do not let anyone see your vote. Put each ballot paper in the [appropriate*] ballot box and leave the polling station.]*
3. [Fold each ballot paper in two. Show the presiding officer the number and other unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper, but do not let anyone see your vote. Put each ballot paper in the [appropriate*] ballot box and leave the polling station.]*
4. Vote only for the number of candidates specified on each ballot paper [and only one of the answers available in the referendum*]. Put no other mark on the ballot papers, or your votes may not be counted.
5. If you spoil your ballot paper by mistake, show it to the presiding officer and ask for a replacement.

* Complete or omit as necessary

#Alternatively, insert such information as to the manner of voting as the GLRO may decide.

+ In the case of a mayoral election, alternatively, insert such information as to the manner of voting as the returning officer may decide.

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

Rule 30(4)

Local Government Elections
Form of Certificate of Employment
REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACTS

Election in the *(Electoral division/ward) of the

*county/district/London borough/country borough of

I certify that (name).....who is numbered
..... in the register of electors for the electoral area [*and voting area*] named
above cannot reasonably be expected to go in person to the polling station allotted to him or
her at the *election/referendum on [*date of poll*] by reason of the particular circumstances of
his or her employment on that date for a purpose connected with the election –

* (a) as a constable

* (b) by me

Signature

* Returning Officer/Police Officer (Inspector or above)

Date

* Delete whichever is inappropriate

Note:- The person named above is entitled to vote at any polling station of the above electoral
area/voting area on production and surrender of this certificate to the presiding officer.

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

Rule 37

Local Government Elections
Form of declaration to be made by the companion
of a voter with disabilities

I, (name of companion),
of..... (address of companion)
having been requested to assist(name of elector)
(in the case of a voter with disabilities voting as proxy, adding 'voting as proxy for
.....(name of elector)) whose number on the register
is to record their vote at the election[s]* and [*referendum[s]]* now being held in this
*parliamentary constituency/*European Parliamentary region/*Greater London Authority/Assembly
constituency/*district/London borough/*parish or community/*local government area],

**delete those words which are inappropriate*

hereby declare that

- I am entitled to vote as an elector at the said election
- I am the * of the said voter and have attained the age of 18 years, and
- I have not previously assisted any voter with disabilities [except.....
(name of other elector), of(address of other elector)]
to vote at the said elections.

***State the relationship of the companion to the voter**

Signed(Companion)

Date

I, the undersigned, being the presiding officer for (polling station) for
the electoral division/ward of hereby
certify that the above declaration, having been first read to the above-named companion and was
signed by the companion in my presence.

Signed (Presiding Officer)

Date

Time (am/pm)

NOTE

1. If the person making the above declaration knowingly and wilfully makes therein a statement false in a material particular, he will be guilty of an offence.
2. A voter with disabilities is a voter who has made a declaration under local elections rules that he is so incapacitated by his blindness or other disability, or by his inability to read, as to be unable to vote without assistance.